

We claim as our invention:

1. A tool for use in picking up and disposing of pet refuse and the like, comprising:  
an elongated handle sized to be held in one hand of a user and having a thumb hole adjacent one end of the handle for suspending the tool from a user's thumb;

a gripping head on the end of the handle opposite said one end and comprising a fixed gripping jaw on the handle, and a movable gripping jaw overlying said fixed jaw, said movable jaw being hinged on said handle for movement away from said fixed jaw into an open position and toward said fixed jaw into a closed position, said movable jaw having an operating lever extending over said handle and movable toward said handle to move said movable jaw toward said open position, and further including a spring yieldably urging said movable jaw toward said closed position;

said jaws having opposed edges at the end of said gripping head remote from said handle defining a receiving opening for the refuse;

a stop limiting movement of said movable jaw in said closed position with said opposed edges spaced a preselected distance apart to accommodate a disposal bag inserted in said gripping head and opening out of the gripping head to receive the refuse;

and said gripping head having an open inner side opposite said receiving opening whereby the disposal bag placed in said gripping head with a closed end of the bag adjacent said open inner side of said head may be pulled through the head to confine the refuse in the bag and pull the bag from the head with the refuse contained therein.

2. A tool as defined in claim 1 further including a disposable flexible bag in said gripping head with a closed end of the bag adjacent said open inner side of the head and an open end of the bag outside the head, said bag being folded around the outside of the tool and formed with a receiving pocket in the receiving opening of the head.

3. A tool as defined in claim 1 further including a seat on one of said jaws inside said gripping head for receiving and holding a flat disposable bag cartridge, said seat comprising means for receiving and releasably holding a generally flat cartridge slide and permitting the slide to be pulled manually through the head for removal through said open inner side.

4. A tool as defined in claim 3 wherein said means for receiving and releasably holding a flat cartridge slide comprise a substantially flat wall for said fixed jaw, flaps for overlying said wall in spaced relation therewith and spaced from each other across said wall, whereby the cartridge slide is insertable under the flaps, and opposed stops on said wall engageable with releasable detents on said slide thereby to latch the slide releasably in the gripping head.

5. A tool as defined in claim 4 further including a generally flat cartridge slide disposed in said gripping head and releasably held in said seat, and a flexible disposal bag folded onto said slide in flattened condition, said slide including means thereon for holding the flattened and folded bag for extension out of the gripping head and unfolding for use in receiving and disposing of the refuse.

6. A tool as defined in claim 5 further including a tab affixed to the open end of the bag and disposed in said receiving opening for use in extending and opening the bag.

7. A tool as defined in claim 5 wherein said slide is secured to said bag and accessible from said inner side of said gripping head for use in pulling the bag through said gripping head with the refuse therein.

8. A tool as defined in claim 7 wherein said slide has an inner edge that is formed as a closure clip for closing the bag with the refuse therein.

9. A tool as defined in claim 1 wherein one of said jaws is formed with a mounting seat for receiving and holding a flashlight with lamp of the flashlight directed away from said handle to illuminate the refuse during the pickup operation.

10. A tool as defined in claim 1 wherein said operating lever is spaced from said handle to serve as a belt clip for the user.

11. A tool as defined in claim 1 wherein said opposed edges defining said receiving opening are formed with aligned arcuate recesses forming an enlarged central portion of said receiving opening.

12. The combination of a tool and a flexible refuse bag for use in picking up pet refuse and the like and disposing of the refuse in the bag, comprising:

a handle to be held in one hand of a user and having a gripping head at one end of the handle, said gripping head having a receiving opening facing away from the handle and an open inner side facing toward the handle;

a flexible plastic bag disposed in said gripping head and having an open end portion disposed outside the gripping head, said bag having an opposite end portion extending through the gripping head and to said open inner side thereof, said open end portion being foldable over the gripping head to define a pocket in said bag at said receiving opening;

at least one movable jaw on said handle forming a part of said gripping head;

and a manual operator for moving said jaw back and forth at said receiving opening with said pocket in said opening, thereby to confine the refuse in the receiving opening;

said opposite end portion of said bag being accessible from said inner side of said gripping head to be pulled through the gripping head with the refuse confined in said open end portion, thereby to pull the refuse with the bag through the gripping head, whereby the bag can be removed from the tool with the refuse contained therein without need for contact by the user with the refuse.

13. A tool and flexible refuse bag as defined in claim 12 wherein the gripping head comprises a fixed jaw and a second jaw movable toward and away from the fixed jaw to close and open said receiving opening, said fixed jaw defining said open inner side adjacent said handle.

14. A tool and flexible refuse bag as defined in claim 13 wherein said second jaw is hinged on said handle for swinging movement of said movable jaw toward said fixed jaw, said movable jaw having an extension forming an operating lever for said movable jaw.

15. A tool and flexible refuse bag as defined in claim 12 wherein said bag is affixed to a cartridge slide insertable through said receiving opening into said gripping head and said gripping head has a seat therein for releasably holding said slide in said head, said bag initially being folded onto said cartridge slide and being extendable out of said receiving opening for use.

16. A tool and flexible refuse bag as defined in claim 15 wherein said seat is formed on said fixed jaw and comprises flaps for overlying said cartridge slide, and yieldable detents for holding the slide releasably in place in the head.

17. A tool and flexible refuse bag as defined in claim 15 wherein said cartridge slide has means therein for holding the bag initially and releasably in the folded condition, and said bag has an end portion accessible at said receiving opening to be gripped and pulled from the head.

18. A tool and flexible refuse bag as defined in claim 17 wherein said accessible end portion has a pull tab secured to the bag.

19. A tool and flexible refuse bag as defined in claim 12 wherein said receiving opening is formed as one open side of a box-like head, said head having a second open side facing away from said receiving opening and a slot formed in a third side for insertion and removal of said bag, and said bag extends through said head with the open-end portion folded outwardly over the tool.

20. A tool and flexible refuse bag as defined in claim 19 wherein said operator is a trigger for pulling the movable jaw toward said open side.

21. A tool for use in picking up and disposing of refuse, comprising:  
a handle sized to be held in one hand of a user;  
a gripping head on one end of the handle comprising a pair of relatively movable elements defining a receiving opening between them, one of said elements being connected to an operator for causing opening movement;  
said gripping head having an open side opposite said receiving opening, and being adapted to receive a flexible bag with an open end portion outside said receiving opening and an opposite end portion in said gripping head, whereby said open end portion may be folded over the gripping head to line the receiving opening and then to be pulled from said opposite end portion through said gripping head for removal from the tool.

22. A tool as defined in claim 21 further including a disposable bag cartridge having a folded refuse bag therein positioned in said gripping head, said bag having an open end portion that is extendable out of said gripping head to be folded around the tool.

23. A tool as defined in claim 22 wherein said gripping head has a seat therein for receiving said bag cartridge, and said bag cartridge has a cartridge slide attached to the bag and releasably latched in said seat to hold the bag therein and to be pulled out through said open side.

24. A tool as defined in claim 23 further including a tab affixed to the open end of the bag and disposed in said receiving opening for use in extending and opening the bag.

25. A tool as defined in claim 23 wherein said slide has an inner edge that is formed as a closure clip for closing the bag with the refuse therein.

26. A tool as defined in claim 21 wherein said gripping head is formed with a mounting seat for holding a flashlight with a lamp of the flashlight directed through the receiving opening to illuminate the refuse.

27. A tool as defined in claim 21 wherein said operator is a lever spaced from said handle and forming a belt clip for the tool.

28. A tool as defined in claim 21 wherein said relatively movable elements are two gripping jaws, one being fixed to said handle and the other being hinged thereon and spring-loaded toward a closed position, said other jaw having an extension forming a lever that is the operator, said handle having an offset at said fixed jaw forming said open side.

29. A tool as defined in claim 21 wherein said relatively movable elements are a jaw element hinged on said handle and two L-shaped elements affixed to said handle and defining said receiving opening on one side and said open side opposite said receiving opening, with a slot between said L-shaped elements for insertion and removal of a disposal bag, said operator being a trigger connected to said jaw element to move it toward and away from said receiving opening.

30. The method of picking up and disposing of refuse and the like comprising the steps of:

providing a manually operable portable tool having a handle to be held in one hand of a user and having a gripping head on said handle with a receiving opening facing away from the handle and an opposite open side, and having a manually movable jaw for confining pet refuse at the receiving opening;

providing a disposable flexible plastic bag with an open end portion and an opposite end portion;

placing the bag in the gripping head with the open end portion extending out through the receiving opening and the opposite end portion at the opposite open side;

folding the open end portion of the bag over the gripping head and the handle and thereby forming a pocket at the gripping opening to be placed over the refuse by the tool;

manually moving the movable jaw to confine the pet refuse in the gripping opening;

pulling the bag at least partially through the gripping head from said opposite end portion to draw the refuse, in the bag, into the head;

and pulling the bag with the refuse from the tool through said opposite open side to separate the same for disposal.

31. The method defined in claim 30 including the further steps of providing a closure clip on said opposite end portion of the bag; and

applying said clip to said bag between the contained refuse and the open end portion of the bag thereby to close the bag before disposal.

32. The method defined in claim 31 wherein the step of applying the clip to the bag is performed after the portion of the bag containing the refuse has been drawn through said opposite end portion of said head and before the open end of the bag has been withdrawn from the head, thereby to close the bag while the open end is held by the tool.

33. The method defined in claim 30 wherein the step of manually moving the movable jaw is performed to push the refuse into the receiving opening lined with the flexible bag.

34. The method defined in claim 30 wherein the step of manually moving the movable jaw is performed to clamp the refuse in the receiving opening lined with the flexible bag.

35. The method of picking up and disposing of pet refuse and the like comprising the steps of:

providing a manually operable tool having a gripping head with a receiving opening facing in one direction and an opposite open side;

providing a disposable flexible bag with an open end portion and an opposite end portion;

placing the bag in said gripping head with the open end portion extending out of said receiving opening and said opposite end portion at said opposite open side;

folding said open end portion over said gripping head and thereby forming a pocket at the gripping opening;

placing the pocket over the refuse and gripping the refuse in the gripping opening;

pulling the bag at least partially through the gripping head from said opposite end portion to draw the refuse, in the bag, into the head;

and pulling the bag with the refuse from the tool for disposal.

36. The method defined in claim 35 including the further steps of providing a closure clip on said opposite end portion of the bag; and

applying said clip to said bag between the contained refuse and the open end portion of the bag thereby to close the bag before disposal.

37. The method defined in claim 36 wherein the step of applying the clip to the bag is performed after the portion of the bag containing the refuse has been drawn through said opposite end portion of said head and before the open end of the bag has been withdrawn from the head, thereby to close the bag while the open end is held by the tool.